

The University of Chicago

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A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE
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For William Hazlitt the *Essay on Population* was a symbol of oppression. As a means of discouraging imprudent marriages, Malthus had proposed the withdrawal of poor relief; and Malthus's principle of population, or frequently some perversion of it, had been cited in support of similar measures that Hazlitt thought unjust to the poor. In his *Reply to the Essay on Population*,¹ therefore, Hazlitt attacked both author and principle, as well as the perversions, in order to weaken Malthus's political influence.

Comment on the *Reply*, although generally more favorable than not, has been slight. Hazlitt himself thought well enough of his arguments against Malthus to repeat them throughout his political essays² and to defend their originality at least twice;³ but although the *Reply* has been recognized as "a serious contribution to the

¹ *A Reply to the Essay on Population by the Reverend T. R. Malthus, Complete Works*, ed. P. P. Howe (London, 1930-34), I, 177-364. All references to *Works* in this article are to this edition. Published anonymously in 1807 in one 8vo volume, the *Reply* comprises five "letters" and a series of "extracts" from the *Essay* with "notes." The first three letters appeared originally in Cobbett's *Weekly Political Register*, March 14, 1807; May 16, 1807; and May 23, 1807.

² *Political Essays, Works*, VII, 113, 332-61, 408-10; *Literary and Political Criticism, Works*, XIX, 280-85, 299-301, 309; *The Spirit of the Age, Works*, XI, 103-14.

³ Letter to Leigh Hunt, April 21, 1821, quoted in Ford K. Brown, *The Life of William Godwin* (London, 1926), p. 334, n.; Letter published in the *London Magazine* for November, 1825, quoted in Thomas DeQuincey, "Malthus on Population," *Collected Writings*, ed. David Masson (London, 1897), IX, 20-22.

Malthusian controversy,"⁴ the nature of this contribution has been only suggested in scattered writings.⁵

Undoubtedly the length of the *Reply*, its repetitions, its contumely, and, most of all, its misrepresentations of Malthus's argument have caused it often to be ignored or underestimated.⁶ Caring less for "Mr. Malthus's nonsense" than for the "opinion of the world respecting it,"⁷ Hazlitt attacked Malthus and his followers indiscriminately, often identifying false and even absurd inferences from the *Essay* with Malthus's meaning and intent. To examine these inferences and their political force is to give relevance to parts of the *Reply* that in relation to the *Essay* alone may seem obtuse or wilfully perverse. Yet Hazlitt's contribution to the Malthusian controversy goes beyond refuting "the opinion of the world"; for his interest in the practical effects of the *Essay* led him to anticipate, more fully than other early critics, the adaptation of Malthus's principle that has been made to explain population phenomena since Malthus's time.

I.

Malthus's first edition (1798) is a reply to Godwin's *Political Justice*. Since "the power of population is indefinitely greater

⁴ Alfred Cobban, "William Hazlitt," *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. Edwin R. A. Seligman and Alvin Johnson, VII (1932), 286. Cf. James A. Field, "The Malthusian Controversy in England," *Essays on Population*, ed. H. F. Hohman (Chicago, 1931), p. 41; Crane Brinton, *The Political Ideas of the English Romanticists* (London, 1926), p. 133.

⁵ Probably the most detailed treatment of the *Reply* printed heretofore is Catherine Macdonald Maclean's analysis in *Born under Saturn* (New York, 1944), pp. 225-32. The *Reply*, Miss Maclean points out, is directed against the practical effects of the *Essay*, rather than Malthus's speculation, and against the "vulgar selfishness" which the *Essay* seemed to typify and encourage. Seeking an "understanding of [Hazlitt's] character" in the *Reply*, she shows that it was Hazlitt's devotion to liberty that led him to oppose Malthus; but with "Malthus's theories as such" she has "no concern," nor does she mention Hazlitt's counter-theories.

⁶ Dr. James Bonar (*Malthus and His Work* [2d ed.; London, 1924], pp. 85, 372, 394) dismisses Hazlitt as one of the critics who "say the doctrine of the essay is a truism." Cf. Dr. Bonar's Foreword to Field, *op. cit.*, p. viii. Professor Norman Himes, in the introduction to his edition of Francis Place's *Illustrations and Proofs of the Principle of Population* (Boston, 1930), speaks disparagingly of the length of the *Reply* but attempts no further evaluation. (Introduction, pp. 35, 57-58.)

⁷ *Reply*, p. 203.

than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man," Malthus deduces "a strong and constantly operating check on population from the difficulty of subsistence."⁸ This check is evident in "vice and misery"—conditions antithetical to the "morality and happiness" that Godwin expected to follow political justice.⁹ Beyond the influence of government, Malthus concludes, population pressure will always exist and will always result in vicious sexual practices, selfish competition for goods, crime, and privation.¹⁰ In his second edition (1803) Malthus shifted his attack from Godwin to the Poor Laws. Although the first *Essay* classifies the preventive checks as vice or misery, the second *Essay* includes a third check—"moral restraint," or the postponement of marriage until one is able to support a large family and, in the meantime, the practice of "strict chastity."¹¹ Malthus did not foresee "any great change in the conduct of men on this subject" and therefore not any great diminution of poverty; but, he believed, if the poor could not count on relief and if they were taught their responsibility for poverty, they would work harder, produce more food, have fewer children, and, consequently, attain an appreciably higher standard of living.¹²

The pessimism and selfishness fostered by the *Essay* seemed, to Hazlitt, inimical to any improvement whatsoever.¹³ Answering the "opinion of the world" as well as Malthus, Hazlitt argues that (1) since, in some of their forms, vice and misery can be traced to other causes than the lack of food and since these causes are removable, (2) since the insufficiency of food may be remedied by producing more food and distributing it more equitably, and (3) since a reduction in the vice and misery resulting from both lack

⁸ Thomas Robert Malthus, *First Essay on Population* 1798 (London, 1926), pp. 13-26.

⁹ Cf. T. R. Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population; or, a View of Its Past and Present Effects on Human Happiness; with an Inquiry into Our Prospects Respecting the Future Removal or Mitigation of the Evils Which It Occasions* ([2d ed.]; London, 1803), Bk. I, chap. ii, pp. 11-12, n.; and William Godwin, *Political Justice* (London, 1793), Bk. I, chaps. iv-vi; Bk. II, chaps. ii-iii, vi; and *passim*.

¹⁰ *First Essay*, pp. 185-90.

¹¹ *Essay* (2d ed.), Bk. IV, chap. ii, pp. 495-96.

¹² *Ibid.*, chap. iii, pp. 504, 507; chap. vii, p. 538; and *passim*.

¹³ *Reply*, pp. 181-82. Cf. "What Is the People?" *Political Essays*, p. 270; "William Godwin," *The Spirit of the Age*, pp. 21-22.

of food and other causes will at the same time encourage the prudential check—since as experience shows, all these propositions are true, vice and misery are not (1) unavoidable or (2) expedient to prevent overpopulation.¹⁴

This argument, like most of the objections to the *Essay* written during the twenty or twenty-five years following its publication, premises that, according to Malthus, (1) the amount of food and its distribution are determined by "nature" rather than human "institutions," (2) all forms of suffering or immorality spring from the disparate rates at which population and subsistence are supposed to increase, (3) any increase in population is therefore undesirable, and (4) vice and misery are expedient to keep population within safe limits. These propositions are not found in the *Essay*.

The Poor Laws, in fact, are an "institution" condemned as reducing total as well as relative subsistence; and the "institutions" of marriage and private property, because they make every man responsible for supporting his own children, appear as the "natural and obvious" means of increasing subsistence.¹⁵ To be sure, Malthus minimizes the power of the ruling classes to help the poor, and stresses the role of the laboring class in bringing about a favorable proportion between their numbers and the wages fund, or the "aggregate quantity of food possessed by owners of land beyond their own consumption."¹⁶ This fund, Hazlitt objects, is fixed not by the "laws of nature" but by the interest of employers, so that labor can obtain an adequate share only through

¹⁴ To diminish the *Essay's* influence, Hazlitt also charged Malthus with plagiarism, although Malthus had adequately acknowledged his debt to Robert Wallace's *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature, and Providence* (1761). (*Reply*, pp. 189-90; *First Essay*, p. 8; *Essay* [2d ed.], Preface, p. iii.)

¹⁵ *First Essay*, pp. 189-98. When Malthus writes, "... Though human institutions appear to be the obvious and obtrusive causes of much mischief to mankind, they are, in reality, light and superficial, in comparison with those deeper-seated causes of evil which result from the laws of nature," he is not, as the passage quoted out of its context suggests, denying the effect of institutions on subsistence but referring particularly to property and marriage, the evils resulting from which are shown to be light in comparison with those which they avert. (*Essay* [2d ed.], Bk. III, chap. ii, pp. 367 ff. Cf. *Reply*, p. 244.)

¹⁶ *First Essay*, p. 203.

the right to strike,¹⁷ a right which had been denied by the Combination Laws of 1799 and 1800. But Malthus, too, although he suggests no means of limiting the employers' power, regrets that "combination among the rich" drives wages below their "natural" level.¹⁸ Similarly, he agrees with his critics that other institutions alter the degree of poverty,¹⁹ maintaining only that regardless of the amount of food produced or allotted as wages, population will always so increase that some members of the laboring class must endure poverty and even actual want.²⁰

Furthermore, Malthus acknowledges "immediate" checks "independent of . . . scarcity," subsistence being "necessary" only as an "ultimate" check to population.²¹ For however complete the utilization of the world's resources may be, the biologically possible increase of population cannot permanently be realized; and at any time, whatever the immediate checks may be, the capacity for producing food is the ultimate limiting factor. The greater the productive capacity diverted from producing food to creating other goods, the higher the standard of living, but the smaller the population.²² Between population, then, and want of food Malthus wished to interpose a barrier or cushion in the form of a higher standard of living, and to this end proposed getting rid of the Poor Laws. The *Essay* does not oppose populousness *per se* but distinguishes between what seemed to Malthus the desirable and the undesirable means of encouraging population: that is, between (1) increasing production and income through "free" competition among both laborers and capitalists and (2) methods, like charity, regulation of wages, or common ownership, which, he thought, would increase population without increasing subsistence proportionally.²³ The *fear* of vice and misery, therefore, might be considered expedient as a means of checking population; but Malthus denies the expediency of these checks themselves, and in

¹⁷ *Reply*, pp. 312-13, 331-33.

¹⁸ *First Essay*, pp. 35-36.

¹⁹ Malthus, *Essay* (5th ed.; London, 1817), Vol. II, Bk. III, chaps. viii-x.

²⁰ *First Essay*, pp. 252-54, 277.

²¹ Malthus, *Essay* (3d ed.; London, 1806), Vol. I, Bk. I, chap. ii, p. 15.

²² Cf. Henry Pratt Fairchild, *People, The Quantity and Quality of Population* (New York, 1939), pp. 134-35.

²³ *Essay* (2d ed.), Bk. III, chap. xi, pp. 470 ff.; Bk. IV, chap. iii, pp. 509-10. Cf. *Essay* (5th ed.), Vol. III, Bk. III, chap. xiv, pp. 28-34.

his second edition, which Hazlitt frequently quotes, he expresses his "mortification" that it should have been inferred from the *Essay*.²⁴

There is, nevertheless, sufficient evidence that the inferences attacked by Hazlitt were basic in arguments affecting legislation. ". . . Political writers of every class," according to a contemporary critic, attributed "the most ridiculous . . . effects to the new subsistence principle. In their theoretic fury, they seemed to consider all the evils of human nature as springing from the increase of population."²⁵ Malthus's statement that "population, when unchecked, increases in a geometrical ratio," whereas "subsistence increases only in an arithmetical ratio,"²⁶ led to the fear of any increase in either population or subsistence. If population should double, Hazlitt points out, it was thought that subsistence could increase only fifty percent; or, if subsistence should be tripled, population would be raised to the third power, the repressive action of vice and misery becoming, in the meantime, catastrophic.²⁷ Other hostile critics testify to this fear,²⁸ and the *Quarterly*, in a review favorable to Malthus, agrees that each ratio was often, though erroneously, thought to be "a philosophical maxim no less indisputable than the principle of motion or gravitation, or any of the ascertained and unerring laws of nature." The difference between the ratios, measured in numbers of people, was considered as "natural" or "necessary" [meaning "inevitable"], so that vice and misery were also thought "necessary" [meaning, often, not only "inevitable" but "expedient"] "to reconcile them and bring them to a level."²⁹

Effects of the *Essay* may be noted as early as 1800. At that time Pitt dropped his Poor Bill, which had proposed supplement-

²⁴ *Essay* (2d ed.), Bk. III, chap. iii, p. 381.

²⁵ [Simon Gray, under pseudonym of] George Purves, *Gray versus Malthus, the Principles of Population and Production Investigated* (London, 1818), p. iii.

²⁶ *First Essay*, p. 14.

²⁷ *Reply*, pp. 219-22.

²⁸ Cf. William Godwin, *Of Population* (London, 1820), pp. 135, 237, 300, and *passim*; George Ensor, *An Inquiry Concerning the Population of Nations* (London, 1818), p. 12; Charles Hall, *The Effects of Civilization* (2d ed.; London, 1813), pp. 325-26.

²⁹ "Malthus on Population," *Quarterly Review*, xvii (July, 1817), 378.

ing wages out of the poor rates, because of objections "by those whose opinions he was bound to respect."³⁰ In 1807 Whitbread's Poor Bill, which first directed Hazlitt's wrath against Malthus, had cited the principle of population as reason for giving the wealthy more power in administering the poor rates,³¹ but the bill was not voted on. Wartime prosperity apparently deterred the ruling classes from pressing the charge that the Poor Laws had created a redundant population. In 1816 and 1817, however, Robert Owen reports "an outcry and great alarm created by the Malthusians, who asserted that . . . the sufferings of the poor and the want of employment . . . arose from an excess of population."³² The Committee of the House of Commons on Poor Laws refused Owen a hearing for his Villages of Co-operation partly, at least, because the members feared that, as the proposed villages extended the cultivation of the soil, population would increase disproportionately.³³ Sir Egerton Brydges, a member of the Committee, testifies that among the objections " (felt, rather than clearly expressed), to the employment of the Poor on waste lands, was the fear to hasten overstepping [of the limits of production]."³⁴ After 1816, apparently, as suggested by the Poor Bills of 1818 and 1819 and by the fate of Poor-Law legislation proposed to the Committee or introduced into Parliament,³⁵ the interest of the ruling class was in curtailing relief, and mistaken inferences from the *Essay*, as well as more accurate ones,³⁶ were used to support this interest.

³⁰ Hansard, *Parliamentary History*, xxxiv (1800), 1428-29. The rest of the passage suggests that Pitt was referring to Bentham and Malthus. Cf. [William Empson], "The Life, Writings, and Character of Mr. Malthus," *Edinburgh Review*, lxiv (January, 1837), 483.

³¹ Samuel Whitbread, *Substance of a Speech on the Poor Laws* (London, 1807), pp. 54-57.

³² Robert Owen, *The Life of Robert Owen by Himself* (New York, 1920), p. 201. Cf. pp. 266, 290.

³³ Robert Owen, "Letter Published . . . July 30th, 1817," *A Supplementary Appendix to the First Volume of the Life of Robert Owen* (London, 1858), pp. 74-75.

³⁴ Sir Egerton Brydges, *The Population and Riches of Nations* (Paris and London, 1819), pp. 81-82.

³⁵ Sir George Nicholls, *A History of the English Poor Law* (London, 1854), II, 192-200; William Smart, *Economic Annals of the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1910), I, 638-40, 705-07.

³⁶ Cf. Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, xxxiii (1816), 1115.

II.

Although identifying popular misconceptions with Malthus's thesis, Hazlitt, unlike many critics, understood that population pressure results from disparity between *actual* subsistence and the *power* of population to increase.³⁷ But he wished to show (1) that this pressure is not proportional to total population, (2) that increased income would not, therefore, aggravate poverty, and (3) that prudence among the poor must begin with an adequate return for their labor. More clearly than Malthus, therefore, he correlates the prudential check with "improvement." "Excess" population, translated into a certain amount of privation, is limited at the point where people, responding to the "difficulty of providing for . . . a family," refrain from marriage or sexual intercourse in order to maintain a standard of living.³⁸ This responsiveness does not depend, as Malthus indicates, on only a "calculation of consequences" but is increased by a greater command of goods, by consequent notions of "comfort and decency," and by "moral causes" such as the "manners," "habits and character" of the people.³⁹ Therefore, as long as employers control the wages fund, cutting off relief would depress and degrade the poor still further without making them more prudent.⁴⁰ On the other hand, extending cultivation would not overpopulate the earth: since population can increase only in "consequence of greater industry and knowledge," the actual increase "would . . . denote of itself, that people would be . . . less likely to involve themselves in wilful distress than before."⁴¹

Thus, writing in 1807, Hazlitt anticipated the usual adaptation of Malthus's principle made to explain the rising standard of living that was simultaneous with increasing population during the nineteenth century. Malthus, of course, was aware that "habits of

³⁷ Notes to *Political Essays*, Works, VII, 409-10.

³⁸ *Reply*, p. 231. Hazlitt does not, like Malthus, explicitly limit "moral restraint" to the postponement of marriage, but I have found no evidence that he uses the term to include contraception.

³⁹ *Reply*, pp. 281-82, 314, 360. Cf. *An Essay on the Principles of Human Action*, Works, I, 1 ff.; "A New View of Society," *Political Essays*, p. 103; "William Godwin," *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19; Brinton, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

⁴⁰ *Reply*, pp. 314, 329-33, 339, 360, and *passim*.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 208, 213, 225, and *passim*.

prudential restraint . . . most frequently arise from the custom of enjoying conveniences and comforts,"⁴² but, skeptical of any "great change" in the practice of such restraint and used to thinking of extended cultivation in terms of inferior soils,⁴³ he believed that "sudden cultivation" would improve the condition of the poor only for "a time,"⁴⁴ and even suggested that it would give such impetus to population that labor would "continue flowing into the market" after the means of supporting it had "essentially contracted."⁴⁵ But through improved transportation and manufacturing, which by 1850 "for practical purposes . . . more than doubled the area and resources of Europe,"⁴⁶ England enjoyed the equivalent of "sudden cultivation," and population, while increasing rapidly, did not increase rapidly enough to prevent a rise in real wages. This higher level of living has been usually explained⁴⁷ by the fact of a differential birth rate, the inference that it results from voluntary restraint on the higher economic levels, and the further inference that (1) conditions making for a higher level of living or (2) simply the attainment of that level enforces the preventive check. Looking back upon part of the period of expansion, John Stuart Mill explained the rising level of living much as Hazlitt had in anticipation. There is a "habitual standard . . . down to which [the labouring class] will multiply, but not lower," and every advance in "education, civilization, and social improvement" tends to raise the standard of comfort that people will not sacrifice for larger families.⁴⁸ The declining birth rate after 1870 has been

⁴² *Essay* (5th ed.), Vol. II, Bk. III, chap. viii, p. 392.

⁴³ *Essay* (3d ed.), Vol. I, Bk. I, chap. i, pp. 8, 11.

⁴⁴ *Essay* (2d ed.), Bk. III, chap. xi, p. 78.

⁴⁵ *Essay* (5th ed.), Vol. II, Bk. III, chap. iv, pp. 304-05.

⁴⁶ Warren S. Thompson, *Population Problems* (2d. ed.; New York, 1939), pp. 44-45.

⁴⁷ There are, of course, theories at variance with the Malthusian explanation of population growth and decline. Some Catholic writers reject Malthus's theory, even in modified form, as not proved or as incapable of proof. (Cf. Edward B. Reuter, *Population Problems* [2d ed. rev.; Chicago, 1937], p. 172.) Another theory is that reproductive power varies in cycles, the fall in the European birth rate in the nineteenth century being due, therefore, to a decline in human fertility. (Cf. Corrado Gini, "The Cyclical Rise and Fall of Population," *Population. Lectures on the Harris Foundation*, 1929 [Chicago, 1930].)

⁴⁸ John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy* (London, 1923), I, 161, 190-93.

cited by modern writers as evidence that, when additional labor could no longer effect a proportional growth in income, people had recourse to the preventive check to maintain their higher standard of living.⁴⁹

According to this explanation, what Hazlitt calls the "responsiveness" of the prudential check to changed conditions seems to have increased, as he predicted, with greater income and the resulting increase in population. Increased income, however, is not enough in itself to raise the standard of living. The rate of increase may also be a factor. Since a larger population cannot immediately follow greater income, whereas improvement in the standard of living can take place almost immediately, the latter is more likely to benefit from the increased availability of goods, and, once established, a higher level of living resists downward pressure. But if resources are exploited gradually, time is allowed for population to grow up to the limit of increased income, leaving the standard of living unchanged.⁵⁰ There are, moreover, "non-material" factors, such as unhappy family life and antagonisms between social classes or nations, that may accompany greater income and a higher standard of living but tend to retard further increases in wealth and material well-being.⁵¹ But although we must qualify Hazlitt's theory that prudence in sexual relations and the standard of living are always functions of either income or population, a higher standard of living has been achieved as a result of greater income, and, contrary to Malthus's expectation, maintained at the expense of the birth rate; and the usual explanation of this phenomenon is the one offered by Hazlitt.

Most of the early critics, to challenge Malthus's arithmetical ratio, cite the possibility of increased food production and more equitable distribution; but to maintain a standard of living many relied not on any check but only on the "naturalness" of producing enough food to keep pace with population. Further opportunities for the division of labor, it was often thought, would

⁴⁹ Fairchild, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-39; Reuter, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-75, 213-14. The use of contraceptives probably was not a factor. Until dealing with very recent population phenomena, it is not necessary to distinguish between sexual desire and the desire for children. (Fairchild, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-30.)

⁵⁰ Fairchild, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-32.

⁵¹ Carle C. Zimmerman, *Consumption and Standards of Living* (New York, 1936), pp. 212-13.

increase productivity more rapidly than population could increase. Any "natural" disparity between population and subsistence and, therefore, any need for checking were supposed to be centuries away.⁵² The preventive check was deprecated as obstructing populousness and therefore improvement and, usually, as irreligious or immoral.⁵³ Forced to admit eventual population pressure, however, and noticing varying birth rates on different economic levels, some critics foresaw safety in physiological checks, in an inverse proportion between fertility and the standard of living.⁵⁴ Others were willing to sanction the preventive check as a last resort, but only when finally necessary.⁵⁵ Coleridge and Southey vaguely correlate "improvement" and "chastity," but "improvement" remains a general term—more rational and moral than economic—and the "chastity" seems to be something indefinitely postponable.⁵⁶ Godwin clearly correlates the prudential check and the standard of living, but infers only that his communal society of rational beings

⁵² James Anderson, *A Calm Investigation* (2d ed.; London, 1801); Ensor, *op. cit.*; Edward Gardner, *Reflections on the Evil Effects of an Increasing Population* (Glocester, 1800); James Grahame, *An Inquiry into the Principle of Population* (London, 1816); Gray, *op. cit.*; Hall, *op. cit.*; Robert Acklom Ingram, *Disquisitions on Population* (London, 1806); Shelley, *Proposals for an Association of . . . Philanthropists, The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Ingpen and Peck (London and New York, 1927-30), v, 226; John Weyland, *The Principles of Population and Production* (London, 1816); and Arthur Young, *The Question of Scarcity* (London, 1800).

⁵³ Ingram, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-6, 30-35, 100 ff., and *passim*; Jarrold, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-56, 245-52; Gray, *op. cit.*, pp. 291-98, 382, 425; Weyland, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-66 and *passim*; Shelley, *A Philosophical View of Reform, Works*, VII, 33; Ensor, *op. cit.*, pp. 181, 195-96, 498.

⁵⁴ Jarrold, *op. cit.*, pp. 261-64; Gray, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-31, 146-60, 283-89; Weyland, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-83, 107-08.

⁵⁵ Gray, *op. cit.*, p. 162; Ingram, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40; Ensor, *op. cit.*, p. 355; Hall, *op. cit.*, pp. 343-47.

⁵⁶ For Coleridge's marginalia in his copy of Malthus's second edition, see Bonar, *op. cit.*, pp. 371-74; George Reuben Potter, "Unpublished Marginalia in Coleridge's Copy of Malthus's *Essay on Population*," *PMLA*, LI (1936), 1061-68; and Kenneth Curry, "A Note on Coleridge's Copy of Malthus," *PMLA*, LIV (1939), 613-15. As Professor Curry points out, Coleridge had evidently been writing his comments for Southey's use. Cf. [Robert Southey], "Malthus's *Essay on Population*," *Annual Review*, II (1803), 297-98.

would not, therefore, be destroyed by over-population.⁵⁷ He does not conclude that increased responsiveness of the prudential check to changed conditions could improve the condition of the poor under a system of private property. Until England is ready for common ownership, he would depend largely on more extensive and intensive cultivation to provide for an unchecked population.⁵⁸ More fully than any of these writers, or probably any other critic writing during the first two decades of the controversy, Hazlitt understood the relationship between the standard of living and the preventive check and the possibility of improvement implicit in that relationship.

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⁵⁷ *Op. cit.*, pp. 526-28, 597-98; William Godwin, *Thoughts Occasioned by . . . Dr. Parr's Spital Sermon . . .* (London, 1801), pp. 72-73.

⁵⁸ *Of Population*, pp. 469, 497-98.

